

Municipal Building
200 N. Walker
Oklahoma City
Oklahoma County
Oklahoma

HABS No. OK-40

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
200 N. WALKER
CITY OF OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

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The Municipal Building of Oklahoma City was constructed in 1936. The Building is bounded on the north by Couch Drive, on the east by 89'er Circle, on the south by Colcord Drive, and on the west by Walker Avenue. The east entrance is the "Front" of the building. This building has been owned and occupied by the City of Oklahoma City for the purposes of City government since its inception.

Oklahoma City was considered a "boom" town from its earliest origins. To help support and encourage the growth of Oklahoma City, the railroads were encouraged to have depots within the City. However, with the advent of the automobile, a problem evolved concerning the various intersections and railroad crossings; traffic flow was often interrupted in the downtown area. By November of 1911, the Chamber of Commerce had passed a resolution to eliminate grade crossings and to request action by City authorities to support the removal of grade crossings.

During the following sixteen years, several actions occurred. The Corporation Commission ordered the Rock Island and Frisco Railroads and the City Council requested the same railroads to establish an adequate consolidated depot facility. The realization that such a facility would cause even further congestion downtown brought about the creation of a Chamber of Commerce Study Committee headed by Judge C. B. Ames in 1920. This committee proposed a four million dollar bond issue for the purchase of the Rock Island tracks and the Frisco depot property which were in the heart of the downtown area. Once these tracks and depot were purchased and relocated, it was anticipated that the congestion problem would no longer exist. This proposal was not accepted by the railroads.

On November 17, 1927, the "Oklahoma Times" carried an article stating that the City Council had passed a resolution calling for a four million dollar bond issue for the purpose of buying the downtown Rock Island Railroad right-of-way and the depot land held by the Frisco Railroad. A public meeting was called on November 18th by the Chamber of Commerce and a campaign was started to raise a \$4,285,000.00 public improvements bond issue of which four million dollars would be allocated to purchase the above mentioned land (20.44 acres). The land was to be used as a public park and convention hall. The remaining funds were used for various park projects. The issue passed. The last train bisected downtown on November 30, 1930.

Four civic buildings were planned for the purchased land. They included the County Courthouse, Municipal Building, Municipal Auditorium, and City Police Headquarters and jail. The Public Works Administration (PWA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the Work Projects Administration (WPA) were involved in the construction of these buildings. In 1935, a bond issue of \$1,787,500 was passed to provide fifty-five percent of the sponsor's cost in erecting the proposed Civic Center buildings. The Federal Government, thru PWA, would provide the remaining \$1,462,500 for the \$3,250,000 consolidated project. The issue passed and all of the buildings were erected and occupied by March, 1937. The Municipal Build-

ing was completed in 1936.

A consortium of architects, Allied Architects, designed the municipal building.- The individuals involved were:

Leonard H. Bailey	B. Gaylord Noftsgger
George Winkler	John D. Jeffers
C. L. Monnot	T. R. Bramblet
C. F. Drury	Guy C. Reid
Walter T. Vahlberg	Edward L. Gahl
William Schumacher	

City officials at the time of dedication included:

Frank Martin
Mayor

O. M. Mosier
City Manager

Councilmen

Robert M. Scott
W. A. Henderson
C. R. Donert
A. D. Estabrook
C. T. Lockwood
A. J. Moore
Joe C. Campbell
Harlow Gers

The construction company for the Municipal Building was the Charles M. Dunning Co..

The rectangular Municipal Building measures 91'x219'10" and has 80,661 square feet. An eight foot projection in the center of the building on the east and west sides emphasizes the entrances to the building. The building consists of four complete floors; the fifth floor is a partial floor. The first floor is a sub-surface floor; the second floor is elevated above ground level. Entrances to the first floor are on the north and south sides. The second floor is entered on the east and west sides.

Reinforced concrete and steel were used in the structure of the Municipal Building. All concrete walls were poured monolithic with columns. A lime stone facade was placed over the concrete. Granite was placed at the base of the building, on the multi-level steps on the east and west sides, and on the single level steps on the north and south sides. Blocks of granite mark the north and south entrances to the building; lime stone blocks were used at the entrances on the east and west sides. Metal lamps were placed on the granite and lime stone entrance blocks.

A floral design cornice was carved into the lime stone and is atop six columns and two half columns which were placed on the face of the projection at the front of the building on the east and west sides. The words: "Dedicated to the People of Oklahoma City and for the Perpetuation of Good Government" and "Municipal Building" are above the floral design at the top of the east and west projections. A decorative carved band was placed in the stone around the top of the remainder of the building. Ornamental iron grille work extends from the second floor to the fourth floor cover-

ing the window areas of the projection on the east and west sides.

The roof line is flat with the fifth floor located in the center. Tar and gravel cover the flat area. Lead was used for the roof of the fifth floor.

A fountain is located at the east entrance. Black concrete was layed on the east and west promanades. A geometric design inlaid next to the regular concrete emphasizes the areas of black concrete on the west side. The promanades and sidewalks have been renovated during the summer of 1981; care was taken to exactly replicate the original design and materials.

The interior is marked with numerous decorative accents. Seven types of marble are found throughout the interior of the building. Marble wainscot is found on the second, third, fourth and fifth floors. Shell stone is above the wainscot on the second and third floors; plaster and paint are above the wainscot on the fourth and fifth floors. Glazed tile walls are on the first floor. Terrazo flooring was used throughout the building in various areas. Stairs made of two contrasting marbles ascend the middle of the interior of the building; the rise is one type of marble and the tread is another type of marble. An elevator gives access to all of the floors; the doors to the elevators on the second floor have an Art Deco design. A postal drop is available in the center of the building to all of the floors.

A plastered soffit is above the east interior entrance to the second floor. Both the east and west interior entrances feature diamond designed marble insets in the flooring, decorative light fixtures, and grille work on the north and south walls. These entrances lead into an open area on the second floor.

The second floor contains Travertine marble on the floors with a large compass inlaid in the center of the floor. Atop the shell stone in the walls (which was noted earlier) is carved wood molding in a dentil design. Decorative light fixtures were used in this area. Columns of red marble are in the central, open area of the second floor. The capitals of the columns feature black marble of an Art Deco design. Beams of decorative plaster are in the ceiling of this area.

The Council's chamber is on the third floor. The chamber has marble extending around the walls at a height of approximately ten feet. Shell stone extends from the marble to the ceiling. Pilasters have carved cornices in a floral motif resting above the capitals. Contrasting marble lintels in a fern motif are above the five exits in the chamber. The ceiling has decorative elements. Chandeliers light the Council's chambers; metal Indian chief heads and amber glass are the major decorative features of the chandeliers.

The walls leading to the third floor offices of the Mayor and City Manager are paneled with American black walnut. Carved wooden brackets top the pilasters which face the stair landing and open area on the third floor.

Air-conditioning has been added to the structure; this has necessitated the lowering of the ceilings in several offices. Removable, temporary walls have been added as the City staff has grown. An elevated press box has been added to the rear of the Council's chambers. Major structural changes and additions have not been made to the Municipal Building.

Documentation for this report included:

Born Grown, by Roy T. Stewart, Oklahoma City Fidelity Bank, N.A.,
Metro Publishing Co., 1974.

Citizens Year Book, 1927-1928, City of Oklahoma City.

"Daily Oklahoman", Oklahoma Publishing Co., Oklahoma City, OK.,
November 18, 1927.

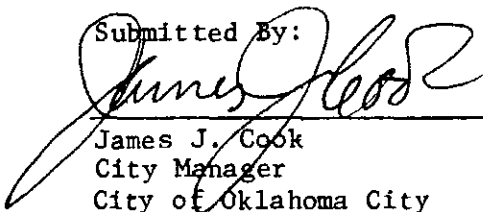
"Oklahoma Times", Oklahoma Publishing Co., Oklahoma City, OK.,
November 17, 1927.

Original Municipal Building blue prints, City Clerk's office of
Oklahoma City, 1935.

Speech by the Mayor of Oklahoma City, Mayor Patience Latting, for
the ground-breaking of the new Criminal Justice Center, 1981.

Yearly Report, Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma City, OK., 1911-1930.

Submitted By:



James J. Cook
City Manager
City of Oklahoma City
July 28, 1981

Prepared by Community Development Department and Bill Peavler, AIA